



CITY NEWS

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Local Arts Index

Wichita one of 100 cities selected to participate

The City of Wichita is one of 100 communities that will be included in the Americans for the Arts' inaugural Local Arts Index. Work has already begun on the 18-month research initiative that will measure the healthy and vitality of the arts industry in Wichita and other participating communities to provide side-by-side comparisons. Findings will be reported by the Americans for the Arts in fall 2011. Manhattan, Kan. is the only other Kansas community to be listed.

Wichita's inclusion in the study is a significant achievement. It will aid in pinpointing strengths and future challenges for the city as a whole in relation to audience demand, art business models, philanthropic giving, program offerings, etc. The Local Arts Index will help all segments of the local arts community – nonprofit, government, for-profit, individual artists, stakeholders – understand the present condition of the industry and give them the tools they need to effectively respond to changing audience/customer needs and expectations and track progress over a period of time.

“Just as the Consumer Price Index tells us how the economy is doing, the Local Arts Index will give us an accurate picture of where the arts are headed in Wichita so that we can develop future strategies to keep our programs strong and relevant,” said John D’Angelo, manager of the City’s Division of Arts & Cultural Services. “We will be part of a national discussion that will have a profound impact on us locally.”

Data will be collected primarily by national researchers, who will receive assistance from staff within the City’s Division of Arts & Cultural Services. In addition to making local contacts, researchers will utilize data produced by the federal government and private organizations.

The Local Arts Index is the continuation of work the Americans for the Arts began with its National Arts Index that was released in January. Those national findings showed losses in charitable giving and declining attendance at larger cultural institutions, even as the number of arts organizations grew.

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